

AO Checklist and Helpful Tips

Below is a list of duties and responsibilities that an Authorizing Official (AO) should be aware of, but not limited to, when processing authorizations and travel vouchers in the Defense Travel System (DTS).

For more helpful information on travel issues, please visit our websites:
www.dtstravelcenter.dod.mil or www.defensetravel.com.

Authorization

1. AOs must approve/authorize advances and partial payments in DTS.
2. AOs must ensure the traveler follows DoD travel policy when requesting advances.
3. AOs must approve amendments related to centrally billed account (CBA) payments initiated by the local Transportation Officer.

When reviewing an authorization an AO should consider the following:

1. Is this TDY trip necessary?
2. Is the number of travelers appropriate?
3. Are funds available?
4. Is the fund cite/line of accounting correct?
5. Were correct procedures followed for requesting premium class air travel and the proper flag officer (or civilian equivalent) approval attached?
6. Did the traveler choose a city pair flight? If not, is the reason consistent with DoD travel policy?
7. Is the mode of travel the most advantageous to the government?
8. Is a rental car needed?
9. Is the rental car being shared by multiple travelers going to the same TDY site?
10. Did the traveler provide justification if other than a compact car was requested?
11. Does the authorization provide for “variations authorized”, if required? (This authority should NOT be routinely granted).

12. Did the traveler leave at a reasonable travel time?
13. Is the per diem location correct (it must be the location of the TDY mission – not where the traveler is spending the night or the airport they are flying into)?
14. Has the traveler provided a nonavailability number if the TDY is to a military installation, the installation has available transient billeting, and the traveler is booking commercial lodging (military only)?
15. Is lodging above per diem (actual expense allowance) necessary?
16. If a commercial lodging property has not been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), did the traveler justify its use?
17. Are there any registration fees? What does the fee cover? Registration fees are considered training and should be paid through the use of a purchase card.
18. Was leave taken during the trip and properly documented IAW local personnel policies? Have you reviewed the Per Diem Entitlements screen to ensure entitlements have been correctly adjusted?
19. Did the traveler use the appropriate form of payment to pay for travel arrangements? If not, did they justify it?
20. If travel is to a foreign country, have appropriate theater and country clearances been obtained outside DTS? Does the authorization reflect that all appropriate actions have been accomplished?

Voucher

AOs must review and approve travel vouchers for payment.

When reviewing travel vouchers, the AO should consider the following:

1. Did the traveler add expenses not previously approved on the authorization?
2. Has the voucher been reviewed against the authorization prior to certification?
3. Were all actual reimbursable expenses claimed?
4. Was the mode of travel consistent with the authorization?
5. Were any claimed long distance calls authorized?
6. Were long distance calls for home/family in accordance with JFTR/JTR, Appendix O?

7. Did the traveler claim gas for a rental car and also pay for prepaid gas on the rental contract?
8. Did the traveler claim hotel taxes for foreign locations (the per diem for foreign locations includes all taxes)?
9. Did the traveler claim reimbursement for airline or rail tickets charged to a CBA? CBA charges are billed directly to the government not the traveler. AOs must be aware of Service and organizational policy on use of CBAs when travelers have an IBA. Review the expense summary of the travel voucher. Tickets that have been charged to a CBA show as “Com. Car –C” while IBA billed tickets show as “Com. Car –I”.
10. Did the traveler select the correct method of reimbursement (government travel charge card (GOVCC) or personal) for each reimbursable expense?
11. Did the traveler complete the voucher with the actual expenses within 5 work days of returning from travel?
12. Did the traveler properly account for any meals provided (e.g., as part of a registration fee)?
13. Are all required receipts and other substantiating documents (e.g. all lodging receipts, any individual receipts for \$75 or more, (including airline tickets) premium class travel authorization) electronically attached to the voucher by being scanned or faxed in accordance to DoD FMR, Volume 9, Chapter 2? Any receipts or other supporting documentation not electronically attached must be retained by the AO’s office for six years and three months.
14. Did the traveler follow correct procedures for returning unused or partially unused tickets IAW the organization’s local policy?

AO Helpful Tips

1. The AO must complete a Certifying Officers Legislation (COL) training course.
2. The AO must be appointed in writing on a DD Form 577 (a combination signature card and appointment letter).
3. An AO may also serve as a certifying official (CO), who certifies vouchers for payment.
4. The traveler or AO must make proper annotations in the record when some off-line procedures are required. Some examples are:
 - a. Premium class travel
 - b. Leisure travel
 - c. Constructive travel

- d. Group authorizations
 - e. House hunting
 - f. Patriot Express travel
 - g. Prisoner transport
 - h. Permanent duty travel.
5. The AO has pecuniary liability for erroneous payments if an investigation determines the payments in question were the result of fraud or negligence on the part of the AO.
6. The AO must ensure that the traveler uses the correct forms of payment to pay for travel arrangements. Some examples are:
- a. Rental car (GOVCC)
 - b. Airline ticket (IBA and CBA)
 - c. Hotel (GOVCC).
7. The AO must know and understand the regulations and policies that govern him/her in the performance of his/her duties. Some examples are:
- a. Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR), Appendix O governs travel for uniformed members
 - b. Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Appendix O governs travel for civilians
 - c. DoD Financial Management Regulation (DoD FMR), Volume 9, Chapter 2 pertains to travel using DTS.
8. The AO must ensure that all government personnel use their GOVCC, if available. (Reference DoD FMR, Volume 9, Chapter 3).
9. The AO may visit the DTS website for additional reference resources on travel matters. Some examples are:
- a. JFTR/JTR, Appendix O
 - b. DoD FMR , Volume 9, Chapter 2
 - c. DTS Document Processing Manual
 - e. GSA airline City-Pairs Program IAW JFTR/JTR, Appendix P.
10. The AO must ensure that sufficient justification for each travel policy exception is included in the comments section so that the information is readily available for auditors.